

HINTS FOR HOUSEKEEPERS.

There is no periodical on the list of our exchanges that we welcome more warmly than *Hall's Journal of Health*. Our readers are indebted to it for many interesting and valuable suggestions, regarding their moral and physical health, and also matters relating to domestic economy, which we from time to time extract from its pages. The articles are always well written and convey the author's ideas lucidly and forcibly. We commend the above-named periodical to all persons desiring to obtain useful knowledge at a very low rate. Dr. Hall is doing a lasting good by disseminating valuable information in a popular form. The following hints are especially seasonable:—

HOUSEHOLD VERMIN.—Including rats, ants, cockroaches, bed-bugs, body-lice, &c.—These are to citizens what weeds are to farmers, compelling all to work for a living; and work gives a good appetite, a vigorous digestion, sound sleep, general health, and a good old age. It may be a question of ethics, whether we ought to set our wits to work in devising any short cuts in the direction of exterminating the house-pests above named. Until our doctors of divinity settle this point, the safer side may be taken of erring from ignorance, rather than overt design, if it be an error to wage a war of extermination against every living thing which occupies your premises without your consent, and without paying for "board and lodging." Prevention is the safest and noblest remedy; of these, personal and habitational cleanliness and a big tom-cat are perfectly efficient. But the number of clean housekeepers in the city of New York is not over one in a hundred, judging from the gangrenous green which defaces the "risers" in the steps which lead into our brownstone mansions and the unswept condition of the gutter part of the street-way, in front of most dwellings. And if any of our readers are curious to see sights, let them "happen in" at some of the "auctions of household furniture," which are so numerous in New York in any April; auctions in first-class houses of families: "going to the country," "breaking up housekeeping," or "going to Europe," meaning, three times out of four, perhaps, a "financial smash-up." Let any reader go into any dozen such places, and judge for himself as to the supply of good housekeepers, tidy and clean, in this great Gotham. But do not judge from the condition of the parlors and parlor furniture, but look into cellars and sinks, and closets and attics; inspect bed-ticks and mattresses, and "comfortables" and woolen blankets. Such sights! And then again, what loads of abominations in the cellar! What piles of bones and bottles; of old shoes and wads of fat; pork-skins, fish-heads, empty mackerel-kits, and Scotch herring-boxes; and other things, too numerous and suggestive to mention; so that if tidiness was the only remedy for house-vermin, New York would soon be like Egypt in olden time, when noisome insects swarmed on the food as it was being passed into the mouth. *Body vermin* breathe through their sides; common sweet oil plugs up their air conduits, and death from suffocation is speedy and certain, always. Ignorance in many cases makes the oil, which is the efficient remedy, merely the vehicle for applying poisons dangerous to man, which have no efficiency whatever in destroying vermin. *Roaches* greedily devour flour paste, and die while eating it, if into half a pint of it, while hot, a dime's worth of phosphorus is stirred, in a tin cup, with a long stick. When this is nearly cold, add a quarter as much grease, to keep it from drying; then smear it on broken glass or dirty board, to be left where they congregate. The "Persian Powder" is harmless to man, but certain death to insects. It is the powdered blossoms and flowers of a Caucasian vegetable, called "Pyrethrum Roseum," of a yellowish gray, odorless, tasteless at first, but leaving a burning sensation. The plant will flourish in our country, and seeds will be furnished by the United States Agricultural Department; address Hon. J. Newton, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. It is the best remedy known, because cheap, perfectly harmless to man, and infallibly fatal to insects. *House-flies*.—Take as much each of ground black pepper and sugar as will lie on a dime, moisten with two teaspoons of cream or rich milk, and spread it on a plate or board; the

flies eat it, seek the air, and die out of doors. Or, mix the liquor of boiled poke-root with a little molasses, and spread it about on plates. The powder of cocculus indicus, which boys use to stupefy fishes, destroys many insects, if scattered about their haunts. As for rats, it is best to keep a good cat or terrier-dog; or keep everything eatable on shelves hanging from the ceiling or around the walls. Chloride of lime, wrapped in a rag and stuffed in rat-holes or passage-ways, will sometimes drive them from the house for a few months, until the chlorine odor has disappeared. Five cents' worth of strychnine, mixed in three table-spoons of corn-meal, with a few drops of anise, attracts the rats, but it is too dangerous a substance to come into any household. A table-spoon of plaster-of-paris in powder, mixed with a pint of Indian meal, with grated cheese or oil of anise, is safe and effectual. Ten grains of powdered phosphorus, mixed with a pint of Indian meal, is a good remedy. Powdered potash, strewn in their paths, makes their feet sore, and drives them away. Rats are too cunning to be caught long by any kind of trap. But there is nothing so efficient as a good-mannered, well-trained cat; dogs annoy neighbors by their barking.

WHITEWASHES.—Common lime quickly and perfectly absorbs carbonic and other disagreeable and unhealthful gases and odors; and for this purpose, in times of plagues, epidemics, and wasting diseases, it is scattered plentifully in cellars, privies, stables, and gutters of the streets. It not only purifies the air and promotes physical health, but as a whitewash enlivens and beautifies wherever it is applied. As it is easily washed off by the rain, if not properly prepared as a wash, it has to be so frequently re-applied that it is considered troublesome by many; hence the rich use paint, and the poor use nothing to protect their dwellings, fences, &c., from the ravages of the weather; yet the difference between a well-whitewashed farm and one where no lime is used would amount to a large per-centage in case of a sale. For the physical and moral benefits which may arise from the abundant use of lime as a whitewash, several modes of preparing it, so as to make it more durable, whether applied in-doors or out, are here given, with the suggestion that the same amount of money necessary to keep a man's premises well whitewashed cannot be expended to as great a moral and healthful advantage in any other way:—1. One ounce of white vitriol (sulphate of zinc) and three ounces of common salt to every four pounds of good fresh lime, that is, lime which has not fallen into dry powder from exposure to the atmosphere, with water enough to make it sufficiently thin to be applied with a brush, yields a durable out-door whitewash. 2. Take a clean water-tight barrel, or other wooden cask, and put into it half a bushel of lime in its rock state, pour enough boiling water on it to cover it five inches deep, and stir it briskly until it is dissolved or thoroughly "slacked;" then put in more water and add two pounds of sulphate of zinc—that is, white vitriol—and one pound of common salt; these harden the wash and prevent cracking; this may be colored according to taste by adding three pounds of yellow ochre for a cream color; four pounds of umber for a fawn color, with a pound each of Indian red and lamp-black. 3. Mix up half a pail of lime and water ready for whitewashing; make a starch of half a pint of flour and pour it, while hot, into the lime-water while it is hot. This does not rub off easily. 4. A good in-door white-wash for a house of six or eight rooms is made thus: take three pounds of Paris white and one pound of white glue; dissolve the glue in hot water, and make a thick wash with the Paris white and hot water, then add the dissolved glue and sufficient water to make it of the proper consistence for applying with a brush. If any is left over, it hardens by the morning; but it may be dissolved with hot water; still it is best to make only enough to be used each day; spread it on while it is warm. It is said to add to the value and lastingness of any lime-wash if the vessel in which it is slacking is kept covered with a cloth; this not only confines the heat, but keeps the very finest of the particles of lime from being carried off by steam, wind, or otherwise. When it is taken into account how much buildings and fences are protected against the destructive influences of the weather, if they are plentifully whitewashed in

April and November, to say nothing of the cheeriness, beauty, and purity which it adds to any dwelling, it is greatly to be desired that the practice of liberally whitewashing, twice a year, should be adopted by every household in the nation, where paint cannot be afforded, and on every farm.

A Good Way to cook Beef.

To steam beef, procure a cast-iron pot of large dimensions, having at the bottom a shoulder, which is found in most large iron pots, at the point where the diameter is diminished to fit the hole in the stove. Across this hole you place some pieces of shingle; then fill up the pot to the shingles with water; add a few pieces of lemon peel or a little mace if you please; place the meat upon the shingles; cover up tight with a fitted tin cover and place over a hot fire. You must be careful to add water occasionally, for if it should all boil away, of course the gravy would be burned, and the flavor of the meat injured. When finished, the bottom of the pot contains a large quantity of most excellent gravy, which, of course, must be thickened and seasoned. A rump of beef, or a shoulder, forms an excellent piece to operate on. Mutton is also fine. Try it.—*Country Gentleman*.

California Wine.

California bids fair to rival the world in the cultivation of the grape and the manufacture of wine. In the Sonora valley alone there are said to be 607,000 grape vines in a bearing condition and 500,800 which have not yet come into bearing. Already the wines of California, undoubtedly the purest and best coming to us by ship, are offered extensively throughout the Eastern States. Objection is made to California brandy that it lacks the color and strength peculiar to French brandy. But those who know how, and where, and of what the French brandies offered in this vicinity are concocted, give a very decided preference to the California article. A little reading on familiar subjects would cure a large majority of our people of their preferences for any description of European liquors, four-fifths of which never crossed the Atlantic ocean, and a large proportion of the remaining fraction we may be sure are manufactured of anything but grapes in England, where the grape is seldom perfected in the open air.

VITALITY IN HORSES.—Some experiments have recently been made in France by persons skilled in the veterinary art, with a view of ascertaining how long horses may live without food in certain contingencies, as, for example, being shut up in besieged places. These results have been achieved:—A horse may live twenty-five days without any solid food, and only drink. He may live seventeen days without eating or drinking. He can live only five days, when consuming solid food, without drinking. After taking solid aliment for the space of ten days, but with an insufficient quantity of drink, the stomach is worn out. The above facts show the importance of water in the subsistence of the horse and the desire the animal must feel to be supplied with it. A horse which had been deprived of water for the time of three days subsequently drank eleven gallons in three minutes.

OIL of cinnamon was formerly made at Colombo, of the fragments and small pieces broken off in packing. A great quantity of this oil is obtained from the coarse cinnamon, which is considered unworthy of exportation in any other shape. Three hundred pounds weight of the bark are said to yield no more than twenty-four ounces of oil. It at one time used to sell at 10 guineas a quart. Its excellence is determined by its sinking in water. The wood of the tree, when deprived of the bark, has no smell and is chiefly used for fuel.

The following are the dimensions and weight of the masts of the new British frigate *Prince Consort*:—The mainmast is 116 feet long by 37 inches in circumference and weighs 18 tons, 4 cwt.; the foremast is 110 feet long by 36 inches in circumference and weighs 17 tons, 10 cwt.; the mizzenmast is 83 feet long by 24 inches in circumference and weighs 5 tons 14 cwt.; the bowsprit is 43 feet long by 36 inches in circumference and weighs 4 tons, 10 cwt.; all made of iron.